A

PETITION

WRITTEN WITH

An intention that it ſhould be preſented

TO THE HOUSE OF LORDS,

CONCERNING

FREEDOM IN RELIGION.

BRITISH
MUSEUM

K London Philosophical Society

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TO THE HOUSE OF LORDS,

CONCERNING

FREEDOM IN RELIGION;

WHEREIN ARE STATED

The PRINCIPLES of that moſt GLORIOUS INSTITUTION, the PHILOSOPHICAL SOCIETY in London.

It is high Time to break the Fetters of Mankind.

Together with NOTES, AXIOMS of FREEDOM; an ADDRESS to the INHABITANTS of GREAT BRITAIN.

Like a Looking Glaſs, which ſhews a Monſter all its Deformity Truth offends the Wicked.

And a JUSTIFICATION of Lord GEORGE GORDON, For being at the Head of the PROTESTANTS againſt the PAPISTS.

The PREFACE contains a curious REMARK on Lord G. GORDON's INDICTMENT.

IN FAVOUR OF

UNIVERSAL TOLERATION AND A GENERAL REFORMATION.

LONDON:

Printed for J. STOCKDALE (from Mr. ALMON's) No. 181, PICCADILLY, oppoſite Burlington-Houſe.

1781

BRITISH MUSEUM

PREFACE.

AS this work under the title of *A Petition of the Naturaliſts or Free-Thinkers*, &c. has been miſrepreſented in the Weſtminſter Magazine for June, 1780. the Author thinks it incumbent upon him to ſtate a few particulars.

While the Diſſenters Bill was depending before the houſe of commons,

he wrote a letter in favour of univerſal toleration, which was inſerted in the General Advertiſer the latter end of April, or beginning of May, 1779. It imported——*It is hoped you* (the members of the houſe of commons favourable to that toleration) *will exert yourſelves to the utmoſt to cauſe the amendment* (the Oath) *to be rejected, or the bill laid aſide, if, by the greateſt misfortune, an univerſal toleration could not take place. By means of this toleration alone, ſince thoſe who ſtand at the helm think that ignorance anſwers their purpoſes beſt, the eyes of the people can be opened; for truth finding itſelf without conſtraint will certainly prevail. Here is the moment when Great Britain will either ſink into that wretched ſtate in which other people are, or lift up her lovely head, with great ſplendor, far above that of any European nation. How happy would I be, if ſo glorious an event ſhould happen!*——*I hear that, in caſe the bill, with the amendment, ſhould moſt unluckily paſs the houſe*

house of commons, a petition will be drawn up to be signed by all free-enquirers, &c.

There was at that time but one English gentleman in the society of Free-thinkers who, to the author's knowledge, wrote in favour of universal toleration, with great honour to himself and his country.

Some illustrious members of the house of commons supported freedom, namely, James Martin, John Wilkes, Charles Fox, Counsellor Dunning, Colonel Barré, Lord George Gordon, &c.

The Minister headed those who were against it. He himself proposed the amendment, and was seconded by Mr. Burke. What can people expect of a reformer who is a stranger or averse to principles on which liberty depends; and who encourages barbarity? Hence it is plain that motives quite

oppo-

oppoſite to toleration prompted the *mitre* and *crown* to countenance popery. Should the Papiſts be, at any time, an exception to univerſal toleration; they muſt thank for it their horrible perſecutions and cruelties, the direful effects of their deſtructive principles, the very bane of ſociety.

The author thought from what that gentleman told him, he himſelf would draw up a petition, but his time, too much taken up, prevented him. Mean while this petition was firſt written in French, a language more familiar to the author than Engliſh (ſo has been every part of this work) and publiſhed before the bill paſſed the houſe of Lords, and he thought that the Engliſh part; at leaſt the ſubſtance of it, would be preſented, ſhould time permit. The petition was printed at the author's own expence, and diſtributed among the members of the ſociety, of which he was then an honorary member.

He

He eſteems it a very great honour. The French part of the petition was taken notice of in the Monthly Review for September, 1779, and in the *Gazette littéraire de l'Europe*, printed at Amſterdam.

He knew that, independently of the bill, it would be of advantage to the community, and particularly to the ſociety which it was meant for, as ſtating principles which had not been ſtated before; and which after a good-will to all men, and a brotherly love among all its members, reduced the principal object of the ſociety to free-enquiry, the foundation of real liberty, the knowledge and happineſs of mankind: the greateſt bleſſings flow from that ſpring.

However he ſuppoſes that the founder of this ſociety, of whom poſterity will ſpeak in rapture, placing his glorious name at the head of the greateſt be-

benefactors of men, had thoſe principles in view; ſo much more ſo as the regulations of this ſociety, under the title of Conſtitutions of *The Philoſophical Society*, written by himſelf, and lately agreed upon, contain them.——*The general liberty of examining* ALL *opinions, is of infinitely greater importance, than the power of aſcertaining any particular truth, or any definite number of truths. The former is the principle of union, upon which all the free-enquirers in the world ſhould form themſelves into a body: the latter ſhould be the object of an individual.—— A ſociety can have no ſyſtem of ſpeculative opinions; and it is unjuſt and impolitic to ſhew a preference to any, which are not of obvious advantage to its neceſſary regulations and laws.*

This ſociety, profeſſing to have no ſpeculative opinions; diſavowing all intentions of making proſelytes to any ſyſtem, every honeſt man of every nation may be admitted into it, whether Jew, Chriſtian, Ma-

Mahommedan, Deiſt, or whatever religious or philoſophical Denomination he is diſtinguiſhed by—We will conſider him as our brother, &c. See the Conſtitutions of the Philoſophical Society, ſold at Mr. Laidler's Printing-Office, Princes-ſtreet, Soho.

The queſtion was to give a name to the ſociety open to all mankind; here a difficulty aroſe: on one hand ſuperſtition had prejudiced the minds againſt philoſophical denominations; on the other philoſophy could not uſe names aſſumed by ſuperſtition. Deiſt, although uſed ſometimes, in ſpeaking of this ſociety, is too empty and ſect-like for a moral philoſopher, beſides Atheiſts and Materialiſts of all denominations, and the divers Deiſts entertaining different notions of the nature, number, ſex, &c. of what is termed deity, would not have joined a particular ſect of Deiſts. Mankind ought to be abſolutely indifferent about

matters

matters beyond their reach, and mind thoſe which are within it, and may conduce to their real happineſs. Let them always walk within the bounds of nature, and glory in nothing, but in being beneficent and juſt.

Naturaliſt, as being analagous to free-thinker or free-enquirer, who, in his purſuits embraces every object in nature, and not ſavouring of any ſect, though never uſed in this ſenſe before, was pitched upon; until the ſociety agreed to take the appellation of *The Philoſophical Society*.

As to the author's works, he cares for neither pretended free-thinkers, nor any perſon whatever, who ſhould be diſpleaſed with them. His principal aim always was, is, and ever will be the public welfare.

Folly and Villany may ride triumphant as long as ignorance and cowardice

dice ſhall permit; theſe may kiſs their hands and feet; tamely lay down under the wheels of their boiſterous and deadly car, drawn by rapine and murder; and ſpeak of the dreadful havock they make with complacency, humility, ſervility, and a guilty indifference; but reaſon, but ſenſibility, neither will nor can.

Look round and ſee whether Chriſtendom, far from emerging from that moſt ſhameful and wretched ſtate in which it ever was plunged, and carefully kept in, does not ſink ſtill more under the weight of oppreſſion.

Among the moſt glorious, everlaſting, modern monuments of its ſound knowledge, refinement and liberty, and above all of the enlightened genius of Great Britain, Lord G. Gordon's indictment is moſt conſpicuous. He is charged chiefly with *not having the fear*

of God before his eyes, —— and being moved and ſeduced by the inſtigation of the Devil.

He is a bad man who is not afraid, according to this principle, thoſe, who have the fouleſt breeches and under-petticoats, ought to be the beſt folks Lord G. Gordon ought to ſmell like a noſegay, and his enemies ſtink like carrion.

The word *God* is a dreadful engine in the hands of GOODNESS: and prieſts and their adherents always ſet up for the Don Quixotes of their deities, with all the vices of corrupt human nature. They repreſent them weak or backward, that they may be the more powerful and forward in ſilencing reaſon; and —— all thoſe who have not *the fear of God*, meaning *of them*, that is, who are too clear-ſighted for them.

If

If a devil (not the devil) is the mover and ſeducer of a perſon, he himſelf ought to be impeached, apprehended, and confined firſt. For no perſon denies that the ſeducer is much more guilty than the ſeduced.

To accuſe any being whatever, he muſt certainly be known; and the public have an undoubted right to inſiſt upon the author or authors of that MOST ELEGANT indictment, their abettors, the impeachers of Lord G. Gordon, telling what the devil is, where he is, in what place, the *moving* and ſeduction took place. They are ſuppoſed to know his name, ſurname, and even chriſtenname, in caſe this devil had turned a chriſtian, the better to accompliſh his diabolical ſcheme, his age, ſhape, figure, and rank among the helliſh crew. Moreover, by not indict-

ing him, the literary world has been deprived of another maſter-piece.

When he, Maſter, Reverend, Sir, Lord, Prince ——, a devil, ſtands before the bar, how ſhall Lord G. Gordon's enemies make good the charge? Was any of them preſent at the *moving* (motion, indeed, may have very funny effects upon the human fleſh) and *ſeducing* (this ſmells of brimſtone) the poor Lord G. Gordon, made to converſe with their angels and not with their devils. If ſome of them were (as we muſt ſuppoſe, for a man muſt be very mad or very wicked indeed to bring forth a criminal charge without proof) why did they not cudgel that devil away, or apprehend him, not upon, but before the fact? If they impeach him from hearſay, they muſt trace the matter up to their devil; if from papers, let them be laid before the public.

May

May be ſome of the nation's SECRET money has been given to ſome emiſſary among them who, not like another Orpheus, or even *pious* Æneas, went up or down, either this or that way, to the infernal regions, and brought out this curious piece of intelligence, which he had from the mouth of the devil himſelf, who did not care a ſtraw there either for him or his employers. If ſo, where is the emiſſary? did he walk, ride, or fly thither? Does he deſerve credit or hanging? Let him haſten forward and give the world an account of that which diſordered fancies are ſo apt to dream of.

But as this would be carrying the joke rather too far, the impeachers, very likely, mean a female devil. And no wonder that the helliſh ladies ſurrounded with devils, ſhould come here to pick, to move, to ſeduce pretty men.

But who in his ſenſes could believe, that Lord G. Gordon, a young, pretty and very ſenſible fellow, could be ſo mad as to ſuffer himſelf to be *moved* and ſtill leſs *ſeduced* by a ſhe devil, while Great Britain ſwarms with beautiful women. This is a great affront put upon the Britiſh Ladies.

Can thoſe who dare earneſtly to tell the world SO MODEST, SO EDIFYING TRUTHS, in *ſo* FLOWERY a ſtile, run the chance of, far from being credited in any one thing, having the tables entirely turned upon them? If they think the nation mad, the nation muſt anſwer to that.

One circumſtance ſtrikes the author moſt; Lord G. Gordon's parties are to be his judges; as for juries, too often at leaſt, a mere farce. The author trembles for him. Thoſe who have power, eſpecially the members of parliament

liament who forſake him, deſerve a worſe fate.

A leſſon for all the members of the committees of aſſociation. He, who can go ſo far, may go any length.

29 AU 62

A Petition written with an intention that it ſhould be preſented to the Houſe of Lords, concerning Freedom in Religion.

My Lords,

We whoſe anmes are underwritten, do, in behalf of all perſons, of every nation, who trampling prejudices under foot, take reaſon as their guide, claim the rights

of human kind. The Diſſenters Bill, which has juſt paſſed the Houſe of Commons, by preſenting to us Toleration expanding its wings over all thoſe who wanted a ſhelter againſt tyranny, was uſhering in the dawn of the fineſt day, and the ſweeteſt and moſt perfect joy made us prepare chearful ſongs to celebrate the glory with which Great Britain was going to be covered by the moſt intereſting event: but our joy has been of a ſhort duration. FANATICISM, that horrid monſter, the inveterate foe of mankind,

kind, who breathes nothing but its deſtruction, holding in his murderous hands a fatal clauſe, like a viper, has poiſoned the ſpring of our felicity. PHILOSOPHY, after immenſe labours, after having undergone the greateſt dangers with a courage more than heroic, ſeems to have promiſed herſelf in vain to reap a part of the fruits of her toils. Though almoſt driven to the brink of deſpair, ſhe muſt by no means be diſheartened. My Lords, ſhe addreſſes you thus: *True nobility conſiſts in doing great things, and nothing*

nothing that does not tend to make men free, good, and happy, can have any real greatneſs: thoſe who REALLY *are above the vulgar, riſe, and take my part,*

The objects we have in view are *Providence, our Neighbours,* and *Society.*

Providence, who heaps ſo many bleſſings upon us, deſerves our thanks, and our worſhip goes no farther. Every man carries in his own heart the altar upon which the moſt agreable incenſe can

can be offered to the Supreme Being: every one of its ejaculations is undoubtedly better than any prayer. Every individual knowing his own wants, needs certainly neither book nor prieſt. When we meet, we are far from believing that we enclose the Divine Majeſty within walls. Would it not be impious? Perhaps that which we deem the whole univerſe, where ſhine forth ſo many wonders, is but a ſmall part of of his temple. What chiefly leads us to our aſſemblies, is a deſire of inſtructing ourſelves, of encreaſing more and more the ties

by which we are united; it is that pleaſure ſo very ſenſible of ſeeing rational beings actuated by the public good, whoſe aim is to improve their knowledge more and more by rooting without reluctance out of their minds all the prejudices which either their own underſtanding or that of the perſon whoſe only ſtudy is the inveſtigation of truth in every thing, points out to them. It is not as a prieſt (we have unhappily but too juſt reaſons for our ſentiments in this reſpect) that the perſon who preſides over our aſſemblies imparts to

us

us his diſcoveries. No doubt we ſhould blaſpheme, were we to ſay that his power is ſacred; reaſon and liberty prohibit us from making a diſtinction between the temporal and the ſpiritual power, ſtill leſs to ſubmit the former to the latter: we can only acknowledge the former. The end he has in view is more and more to enlighten our minds, and he works at it, without intermiſſion; if he endeavour to be diſtinguiſhed, it is by his virtues; he ſhews himſelf to us as a pattern of equity; charity walks by his ſide. He unfolds human knowledge

ledge to every one of us, and particularly to thoſe who have not either the time or the power to inſtruct themſelves; and ſound reaſon dictates to him his morality. It is very juſt the aſſembly ſhould reward him for his trouble, eſpecially when it is the queſtion to put him above want, that he may work without interruption for the good of ſociety.

After having paid the duties we owe to the firſt cauſe, we come to our neighbours, and to ſociety. Our benevolence extends

to

to all men; we look upon the members of our ſociety as brothers; their cauſe is ours whenever juſtice is on their ſide. Our enemies are thoſe who in encroaching upon our rights, encroach upon thoſe of mankind. Far from encouraging idleneſs, we excite every one to labour; we ſtir up his induſtry, and whenever it is in our power, we give him the means of exerciſing it. We deteſt hypocriſy; we only pretend to diſtinguiſh ourſelves by our underſtanding, our good faith, our juſtice, our goodneſs, our humanity. We ſtrive to

ſweeten

leſſen as much as poſſible the troubles of life, and we always endeavour to enjoy, without going beyond the bounds of reaſon, and to cauſe others to enjoy, the bleſſings which nature offers us.

We acknowledge no other ſociety, no other country, but that wherein the rights of mankind are reſpected, and tyranny is abhorred, and chiefly ſpiritual tyranny, which is an exceſs of impiety, that makes a man ſhudder, covering herſelf with the veil of religion, which ſhe never knew, cauſes to be thrown into dreadful dungeons

or flames, thoſe unhappy perſons who refuſe to countenance her villany.

We are always ready to ſhed our blood in the defence of our liberty. If vile ſlaves, a prey to prejudices, ſinking under the weight of their miſery, goaded on by pityleſs maſters, who with a cutlaſs in their hands force them to march, may ſometimes in fighting for their torturers overcome their enemies; what will not thoſe enlightened and free men effect who breathing nothing but peace ſhall oppoſe ſuch among thoſe wretches who,

who guided by their tyrants ſhall come forward to trouble their tranquility? Led on by juſtice, by victory, they will fly to encounter them, and they will ſoon ſhew thoſe wretched creatures the difference there is between darkneſs and light, ſlavery and liberty, the fury of a wild beaſt, and the courage which a noble reſentment inſpires.

Permit us, my Lords, to make a few quotations from a book entitled *La Raiſon*: I aſk that young King, " had you rather " command a ſuperſtitious people, " a nation

" a nation of vile men, whoſe
" minds are inceſſantly dejected
" through fear, a nation of
" ſlaves, than to command a
" people conſiſting of philoſo-
" phers, of heroes, who from the
" boſom of liberty, wherein
" they ſhould live in peace un-
" der the ſhelter of the moſt
" holy laws, ſurrounded by the
" fine arts, would ſet out like
" an irreſiſtible torrent to over-
" throw all thoſe, who con-
" ducted by tyranny ſhould
" make the leaſt attempt againſt
" that immoveable throne upon
" which they have placed you,

" and where they ſee ſhining
" forth round your auguſt tem-
" ples that glorious crown which
" you hold from their hands,
" and ſtill more from their
" hearts !"

Our obedience to the laws never will hinder us from being ſenſible of the injuſtice which may be in them, and we will never loſe ſight of thoſe which ſtand in need of a reformation. As parts of the whole we think ourſelves entitled at all times to give our opinion about every thing

thing that concerns it. Our great object is to cauſe barbariſm to vaniſh away, and to make concord and felicity reign. Should a whole nation have the good luck of adopting our principles, ſhe would be aſhamed to compare the paſt with the preſent. Woe to them who ſtand againſt the promoting of reaſon, and conſequently againſt the happineſs of men!

My Lords, we have thought it neceſſary to enter into theſe particulars to lay before you the ſprings of our conduct, and the

duties we have preſcribed to ourſelves. As we are ſtrangers to duplicity, we candidly confeſs that the clauſe (you know very well whence it comes) which they have taken into their heads to inſert in the Diſſenters Bill conſtitutes ſuch an oath as madneſs may propoſe to folly, but not to reaſon, at leaſt not with impunity.

Faith, that is to ſay *Belief*, wants conviction; now, how could any one be convinced of what he could by no means underſtand, of that which claſhes with

with common ſenſe in the moſt ſhocking manner? How could that be looked upon as the work of the Almighty which debaſes the human mind? How could we give credit to that which a man half in his ſenſes could by no means believe without covering himſelf with the veil of hypocriſy?

Conduct wants a ſound morality, and it cannot be found in a monſtrous collection of abſurd, ridiculous, infamous, abominable tales, which ſeem to have been fabricated with no other intent

but to pervert the mind, to corrupt the morals, to turn man into a brute, to chain him, to tyranniſe over him, to cruſh him, and which (as if they ſhould ſtand in need of refutation) have been fully confuted by the greateſt men, by thoſe to whom mankind is moſt indebted.

Could error be as a compaſs to man in his own conduct, the conſequence would be that the moſt ignorant, the moſt ſuperſtitious, would be better than the moſt enlightened, that the blind would be above the clear-ſighted,

that

that the mad would be preferable to the rational. To direct the mind towards virtue is it then neceſſary to deprave it? To give men principles of morality is it then neceſſary to begin by depriving them of reaſon? It is true that in general the morality and the virtue propoſed to them ſuppoſe that folly has ſeized upon the organs of their underſtanding. Like thoſe barbarous Scythians, who put out the eyes of their ſlaves that they might turn the millſtone with leſs abſence of mind: ſpiritual tyrants begin by putting out the eyes of their

ſlaves

ſlaves, who, in an exceeſs of ignorance, of cowardly abjectneſs, kiſs the hand that ſcourges them.

" To ſay that ſuperſtition, " which in the hands of prieſts " becomes a moſt frightful ſcourge, " is neceſſary, it is as much as " to advance, that famine, the " moſt contagious, the moſt mor- " tal diſtempers, &c. are neceſſa- " ry or even uſeful to mankind. " The laws reſtrain men; let thoſe " laws be juſt, intelligible to " every one; let them give to " thoſe that are enlightened an " entire liberty to inſtruct men,

" and

" and you will ſee in a mo-
" ment a prodigious change.
" Every thing will look as if
" ſpringing up again, and there
" will be as ſtriking a difference
" between men as between the
" darkeſt night and the brighteſt
" day." Tyrants are fond of ſu-
perſtition, and they know why.
We will add, that if reaſon ſhould
get the better, there would be no
more compariſon between the an-
cient and the new world, than be-
tween a dark, damp, and cold
priſon, full of venemous inſects,
and thoſe delightful fields which,
in that charming ſeaſon when the
earth

earth covers herſelf with green and flowers, diſplay in the fineſt climate the brighteſt objects in nature.

Superſtition being conſequently not only uſeleſs, but even pernicious to every thing, ſhe can prop no other government but that whoſe ſpring ſhe moves and of which ſhe is in fact the miſtreſs. The firſt magiſtrate ought to be the firſt to open his eyes, to break his too ſhameful fetters, to ſhake off the yoke of that monſter: with all his pagentry he is but the firſt of her ſlaves,

and

and if he ſhould believe, in his *indolence* (we turn away our head from *that buſtle of politics to which the people fall a victim)* in his *ignorance*, in his *cruelty*, that the others are likewiſe his ſlaves; the firſt laughs at his abjectneſs, at his credulity, and ſhe knows very well that in the main they, as well as he, belong to her. Should he unluckily be enlightened, and ſee in cold blood the nation plundered, loaden with fetters, &c. would he not be the more guilty? It is his duty to give a good example. Let him call Liberty to him, and ſend her

to

to the meaneſt among the citizens, in a moment he will reign over all their hearts. Was ever ſo glorious a triumph!

" The prieſthood," ſays the author of *La Contagion ſacrée ou Hiſtoire naturelle de la Superſtition. The ſacred Contagion or natural Hiſtory of Superſtition*—" excuſes " and pardons eaſily in princes " thoſe faults that have an influence " upon ſociety. It forgives them " in the name of the Deity. It " ſhews not the ſame indulgence " whenever its pretended intereſts " are at ſtake or it is the queſ-

" tion to tranſgreſs thoſe duties
" which it has contrived. A ſuper-
" ſtitious monarch thinks he has
" nothing to reproach himſelf
" with, provided he has omitted
" none of thoſe ſenſeleſs practices
" which ſuperſtition impoſes up-
" on him; he is ſure to attone
" by this means for his moſt
" hurtful crimes, and for the moſt
" cruel outrages which he com-
" mits againſt morality and rea-
" ſon."

The abettors of nonſenſe have always in their mouth the word Atheiſt, to brand all therewith

who do not think as they do: As if he who acknowledges for God any other being but God himſelf, ſhould not join ſuperſtition with atheiſm.

They who are convinced that it is their intereſt to keep the people in the dark, do not fail to perſecute thoſe who want to enlighten them.

Look towards thoſe horrible ſcenes which Superſtition, breathing nothing but plunder, covered with the aſhes of unfortunate people, and wallowing in human blood, with

with her vipers creeping round her members, has diſplayed thro' the whole world. Had the furies, called infernal, inſtead of hair, ſerpents as frightful as thoſe ſwarming round her hideous head, whoſe look is capable of chilling the blood in one's veins?

Intolerance, loaded with fetters, *ſan-benitos*, holding in one hand a lighted torch, a dagger and poiſon; and in the other a pan full of quick fire follows her footſteps: the keys of her priſons hang ſtrung round her girdle. Injuſtice, Slavery, Diſcord, Indi-

gence, Cruelty, and Deſpair are her attendants. The imps of that arch-fury having the look of an hypocrite, dreſſed in lamb ſkins, are made up of a much more baneful venom than that of the moſt venomous vipers. One of the illuſtrious victims ſacrificed not long ago to their rage is *Don Pablo d'Olavidé.* Spain has juſt been the theatre of that ſcene which would move a heart the moſt innured to cruelty. Here, a prey to the moſt bitter grief, we cannot help ſhedding tears over the deplorable fate of that unfortunate man.

" When

" When Spain drove away her
" Jeſuits, the blow was given
" according to what *Saint Mat-*
" *thew* ſays, *as the lightning*
" *which comes out of the caſt*
" *and ſhews itſelf as far as the*
" *weſt.* She ſhewed a ſpark of
" reaſon. The fires of that heaven-
" born maid are not yet entirely
" out, and the aſhes of the un-
" fortunate victims of monkiſh
" rage which cry out for venge-
" ance, ſhall at laſt obtain it.
" Then, coming out of the bo-
" ſom of dark ſuperſtition, and
" ſhaking of the ſhameful yoke
" of a bloody prieſthood under
" which ſhe groans, ſhe languiſh-

" es; ſhe would ſee from the
" midſt of proſperity her fruitful
" fields covering themſelves with
" rich productions; her towns,
" her fields half deſert filled with
" inhabitants. The dread of thoſe
" frightful fires no longer would
" hinder genius from taking
" ſwing; knowledge would ſuc-
" ceed to barbariſm, and con-
" ſtraint would give way to
" the liberty of thinking, ſpeak-
" ing and acting. Happy inha-
" bitants of Iberia, after having
" been for ages the victims of
" the moſt fatal ſuperſtition, you
" would ſee in the midſt of
" opulence whole nations going

" among you to enjoy the
" ſweets of your climate, and
" increaſe your abundance by
" their induſtry."

See the bleſſings that Philoſo-ſophy, whoſe divine look charms and whoſe heart is goodneſs it-ſelf, preſents to you, and which you may derive from her. She is attended by Juſtice, Liberty, Peace, Abundance, Humanity, and Felicity; the fine arts fly about her: all nature ſmiles at her preſence.

Divine object, raviſhing the ſoul!
Reign, O reign for ever in our hearts;
Let them burn with the moſt animating flame:
Man, without thee, muſt be a ſtranger to bliſs.

War,

War, that deſtructive ſcourge, almoſt always the fruit of ſuperſtition, is not known to philoſophy but when it is the queſtion to repel tyranny, to bring injuſtice to reaſon. Should philoſophy govern men, they would know war but by name. According to her what they call POLITICS is nothing but THE ART OF VILLANY. According to her one government deals with another as a private man with his like, making the ground of his conduct benevolence and juſtice. Government acts towards the citizens as a good father, as the

the moſt tender mother towards children whom they cheriſh, and the citizens act towards government, to whom they have delegated their power, for no other end but to make them happy, as thoſe tender and grateful children act towards their mother and their father, for whom they are ready to ſacrifice themſelves, being mutually convinced that their intereſts are inſeparable; it is by not knowing their true intereſts that they who govern (we don't ſpeak of tyrants) go aſtray from this rule.

Super-

Superſtition is ſtill much more hideous, and philoſophy more lovely than they are repreſented in our deſcriptions of them. Who could be embarraſſed in his choice?

The glory of Great Britain is not entirely withered yet, ſince the Naturaliſts continue to meet * in England. It is to

* They have done ſo for about three Years in Margaret-Street, Cavendiſh-Square, London, under the direction of the Rev. David Williams, well known in the literary world. They aſſemble every Sunday morning at about half paſt eleven.

you,

you, my Lords, not to let her luſtre vaniſh away; it is to you to increaſe it by eſtabliſhing an univerſal toleration. Votes ought to be weighed, and not numbered; though the Houſe of Commons ſeems to have determined the fate of this empire, it is no leſs true that thoſe illuſtrious men who have oppoſed the clauſe, have deſerved well of their country by defending the rights of mankind. We hope they never will loſe ſight of them, and that if unluckily the Bill ſhould paſs under the auſpices of the preſent miniſtry, the time

time will come, may be it is nigh at hand, when new efforts will crown the work. They, of whatever rank, who have at heart the welfare of men, ought no longer to refrain; they ought to ſhew themſelves ſuch as they are, and join us.

To tolerate every thing except that belief from which prejudices are baniſhed, it is as much as to intend to turn a whole country into a mad-houſe.

Remember that liberty is upon the point of diſappearing, at leaſt for

for the moment, in caſe you ſhould ſecond thoſe who have been actuated either by ignorance or corruption.* The bloody hand

* The Britiſh Parliament ought to be filled with real friends to liberty, who, having nothing in view but the intereſt of their country, would bring to a condign puniſhment the wretch, *of any denomination*, who ſhould dare to offer a bribe to any of them, *eſpecially out of the people's pockets*, to enſlave, to plunder, to torment the nation. It ought to be always ſitting, and to make a general reformation for the public good, minding the adminiſtration of juſtice, the POOR RATES, &c. Such bounds ought to be ſet every where, ſo as to hinder any wicked man, or any ſet of wicked men from tyrannizing over, nay, from even diſquieting the nation.

of Fanaticiſm is going to be armed with a two-edged and moſt ſharp dagger. It is the queſtion to overthrow him by putting his imps out of condition to exerciſe their fury: by this means alone can be tamed thoſe ſo wild beaſts, and perhaps turned into men.

" The moſt inſupportable deſ-
" potiſm is the ſpiritual power.
" He who wants to maſter
" the mind by means of dun-
" geons, of poiſon, of iron, of
" fire, is the moſt abominable
" of all tyrants. God has left

"to man the liberty of thinking,
"of believing what he pleaſes,
"man wants to uſurp over his
"like, a right that God him-
"ſelf has reſpected. A ſpiritual
"power ought to fight with
"no other weapon than argu-
"ments."

"It is evident," ſays M. de Voltaire, "that any man who "perſecutes another, becauſe he "is not of his way of think-"ing, is a monſter."

If thoſe among the Diſſenters, who in their belief ſet out from

the ſame point as the others, do not cauſe the bill to miſcarry ſince it does not grant an entire liberty of conſcience, it is becauſe they know toleration but as far as it concerns themſelves.

Either the partiſans of the bill, ſuch as it is now, intend to perſecute thoſe who ſhall not condeſcend to ſubſcribe to the clauſe; or to tolerate them tacitly: in the firſt caſe the evil ought to be prevented without any loſs of time; in the ſecond they ought without impulſe, to come forward, making a ſtep towards liberty,

liberty, towards humanity, by giving their votes againſt that clauſe. Every prieſt who in a ſubject of ſo great a moment, ſhews himſelf the friend of men, deſerves the higheſt encomiums, and rewards proportionable to the good he does.

My Lords, we leave it to your wiſdom, having always before us the juſtice of our cauſe, which aſſures us, that in ſpite of corruption it will ſooner or later prevail under your auſpices.

A M E N.

liberty, towards humanity, by giving their votes against that clause. Every priest who in a subject of so great a moment, shews himself the friend of men, deserves the highest encomiums, and rewards proportionable to the good he does.

My Lords, we leave it to your wisdom, having always before us the justice of our cause, which assures us, that in spite of corruption it will sooner or later prevail under your auspices.

A M E N.

NOTES, AXIOMS OF FREEDOM,

By the AUTHOR of the PETITION.

Like a looking-glaſs, which ſhows a monſter all his deformity, truth offends the wicked.

An Addreſs to the INHABITANTS *of* GREAT BRITAIN.

London, Jan. 18, 1780.

THE Time comes, here it is, when Liberty, too long kept down by Tyranny, is to endeavour to triumph over this; may ſhe overthrow her mortal foe, that frightful monſter, who de-

lights in the tears of men; who feaſts on their ſufferings.

Do not you ſee, on one ſide, thoſe wretches who, though loaden with chains, are going, ſpurred on by their tyrants, to oppoſe liberty, and to join new fetters to thoſe which put their members almoſt out of joint?

Do not you perceive, do not you hear, on the other, thoſe friends to liberty, thoſe great men, who caſting dreadful looks upon Corruption, who turns her eyes quite aſhamed, rouſe, loudly, the people buried in the moſt fatal lethargy, whom an exceſs of miſery renders almoſt inſenſible, or ignorance indifferent?

What are you about? here are the Axioms of Freedom, liſten, open your eyes, up, up; in ſo important a cauſe, on which the happineſs not only of this

generation, but likewiſe of all thoſe that are to come, depends, it is the duty, it is the intereſt of every honeſt man, of every friend to freedom, ſay, if you pleaſe, of every citizen, no matter what countryman he is *, to do all in his

 power

* Strictly ſpeaking, he alone is a part of a nation (which, with reſpect to the other nations, is what one individual is to another) who knows its true intereſts and has them at heart; this conſtitutes the Citizen of the World, the Philoſopher, the real Countryman of any man. The others who fancy to belong to that nation, are really its foes, through ignorance, through knavery, they are in fact, enemies to all mankind; this conſtitutes the ſlave, the tyrant, a traitor to his pretended country, to himſelf, to his deſcendants, to the whole world.

" *Every ſubject* (*every* CITIZEN) *of this State is not only authorized, but by* THE GE-

NIUS

power to carry the reformation as far as it can go, and to get ſo meritorious an undertaking crowned with ſucceſs.

Then Liberty, in a triumphal car, will announce to all nations, that Great Britain has given the example and that, in their turn, they ought to follow it; that the inſtant they ſhall break their too ſhameful fetters, peace and happineſs will come to ſettle among them. What! will ſhe ſay to them, would you yet, you barbarians, make to conſiſt glory in ſprinkling the earth with tears and with blood, in ſtrewing it with

NIUS OF ENGLISH LIBERTY, *he is encouraged and excited freely to examine the defects of the conſtitution, the errors of government; the conduct of the perſons, employed in its various departments: and as freely to cenſure, wherever cenſure, in his judgement ſhall be due.*"

An Addreſs to the Freeholders of Middleſex.

corpſes,

corpſes, in carrying iron, fire, devaſtation to the four parts of the world, in making men tremble, ſigh, and ſob ~~men~~, in perſecuting, deſtroying, honeſt people, in murdering, robbing for your tyrants! If that be your glory, wretches, your hells are elyſian fields in compariſon to your dens, and your devils poor, harmleſs lambs, if compared to you.

A COSMOPOLITE.

Who has lived above 13 years in this country and who actuated by the good of ſociety, witneſs his works, has ſacrificed, till now, every thing to it. He might very well ſay no man ever deſerved better of the world than he, yet, ſuppoſing the imps of villany ſhould, for it, bite, with ſpite, their tongues through, would that make him, any way, amends?

NOTES,

NOTES, AXIOMS OF FREEDOM.

Naturaliſts, in the Title.] *Naturaliſt*, taken in this ſenſe, and *reaſonable* are ſynonimous; it means, who only takes Nature or Reaſon for a guide in belief, morals, &c.

Page 3. *Nobility.*] He, who ſtands upon the nobility of his anceſtors (even ſuppoſing it to be real, *we have given the touchſtone of it)* is a moſt deſpicable beaſt, if he be without virtue; and even in caſe his does not equal that which gave birth to that nobility.

Would a virtuous man bluſh at the ignominy of his anceſtors? One would think not; and although he ſhould, he would be no leſs virtuous, no leſs commendable, though in diſtreſs.

So

So a vile man would pride vainly in the glory of one or ſeveral among his anceſtors; he would be no leſs vile, no leſs deſpicable though in opulence, although covered with ſtars, garters, ribbons, &c.

Let ſimpletons, ſlaves, who only watch for the preſervation, the increaſe of prejudices, tyrants (which look as if ſpued out of a much more than infernal abyſs, begotten by Parricide and Peſtilence, ſuckled by Inſenſibility and brought up by Villany, to ranſack the land, to overflow it with blood, to ſcourge, to extirpate mankind) laviſh, as much as they pleaſe, frivolous, ſhameful titles, marks, &c. among ſlaves of their own ſtamp; let them load, let them cover themſelves with them as much as they chuſe; infamy is their lot, it ſprings, and by no means nobility, from their favours, from their grants.

Men truly free find true nobility in virtue, in their glorious endeavours to communicate it to others, to ſhow them the way which leads to happineſs, to deſtroy ſuper-

ſuperſtition and tyranny, which go hand in hand; here *virtue*, *nobility*, *glory* are ſynonimous. *They are too often obliged to renounce their country, their family, their fortune, in a word, every thing which can make men happy; without mentioning the dangers they run:* viz. *the loſs of liberty, of life,* &c. THIS IS THE REWARD THAT MONSTERS HOLD UP TO VIRTUE. Is there a nobler undertaking? Can a greater ſacrifice be made? Theſe, indeed, may ſay, in the preſence of all mankind, if there be diſtinctions, honours amongſt you, we have a right to them.

P. 4. *They who really*] Bleſſed be for ever thoſe great men, who, far from falling aſleep in the boſom of effeminacy, of indifference, or from being the tools of deſpotiſm, as is too often the caſe with perſons of their rank, ſtand forth the friends to freedom,

P. 14. *Round your auguſt Temples*] Such epithets do not become tyrants.

P. 20 *The laws refrain men*] Should men be enlightend, they would be honeſt out of principle; they ſhould want no law to force them to be ſo.

Ibid. *Let thoſe laws be juſt, be intelligible*] Is not the law-gibberiſh very clear? Injuſtice, being afraid of ſhowing herſelf, always covers herſelf with a thick veil; abſurdity cannot expreſs herſelf cleverly; witneſs, among the reſt, the Pope's Bulls, the mandates of *your Lords* the archbiſhops and biſhops, the proclamations of the K—g of Eng—d and Company, who enjoin a general faſt to GREAT BRITAIN. In places, wherein every thing beſpeaks opulence, ſitting ſupinely upon ſtately ſofas, given up to idleneſs to gluttony, to profligacy, thoſe PIOUS *leaders*, having nothing better to do, take it into their heads to forbid, *upon pain of flogging, of any puniſhment* THEY MAY THINK PROPER, a nation, thoſe very people, whom they have beggared, ſtarving, whoſe blood they ſtill ſuck up, whom they devour, to fill their bellies,

for

for to ſooth the WRATH of GOD, (pray, did they ever know him?) for to engage him to hurl, againſt their enemies, thoſe thunderbolts, which Juſtice is, long ago, levelling againſt their own heads. Is there any thing more ridiculous, more ſhocking? A man muſt abſolutely be mad to believe, that, by faſting, he ſhall pleaſe any other being, but him who is hungry, and who expects that which he ſhall not eat, or the prieſt, who diminiſhes his expence, that he may increaſe his offering, &c.

There are knaves who make ſimpletons believe, that, by tormenting themſelves, they will pleaſe their creator.

Thoſe people ſuppoſe their God to be a being like themſelves, delighting in the ignorance, in the ſlavery, in the troubles, in the miſery, in the torments, in the deſpair, in the deſtruction, in the *damnation* of men, of innocent people.

They implore that God to confirm them in their *juſtice*, to afford them new means of exerciſing it; to make THEIR PEOPLE more

and

and more *clear-ſighted* ; to kill every one who does not chuſe to belong to them ; to increaſe their power, to the end that thoſe GOOD SHEPHERDS may more eaſily conduct *their ſheep to their fold*, and catch ſome others.

P. 22. *The firſt Magiſtrate*] Royalty is but the firſt employ in a Common-wealth.

Ibid. *With all his pageantry*] It is not by undoing the nation he is *to ſupport his dignity*, unleſs this word means infamy, but by watching inceſſantly for her welfare. He ought to part with all that tinſel which ſurrounds him ; far from ſquandering away millions which have coſt ſo much ſweat to the people, it is his duty to act with much œconomy, and to ſee all the grievances redreſſed. He ought to make all his glory conſiſt, and it is likewiſe but his duty, in being juſt, affable, humane, beneficent towards all his, not ſubjects, we will not ſay neither maſters, meaning owners, let us ſay, fellow-citizens. Subject means ſlave, and a free man is only

ſubmitted

ſubmitted to the laws, ſuggeſted by reaſon. Theſe are the ties ſo agreeable, which unite all the members of a well-regulated ſtate, and which ſecure their independence.

It is too ſilly to think that a nation can find glory in the luxury of a man, of a ſervant, who ſets up for a maſter, and who preys upon, who ruins her; ſhe can find none but in her own virtue.

P. 23. *It is his duty to give a good example.*] If people follow, though their ruin be the conſequence, the bad example he gives, will they not follow the good one, where they ſhall find their welfare? What a baneful error to believe the contrary!

A people that is not enlightened apes the moſt ridiculous novelty, under the denomination of *faſhion*, which appears at court; if corruption reign therein, it ſpreads all over the country. Among the firſt that catch this epidemic diſtemper, are the juſtices; theſe magiſtrates high and low, in a word, all the lawyers, ſetting their conſcience and their country

country aſide, inſenſible to every thing but gain, become the ſupporters of the moſt unjuſt laws and of thoſe who make uſe of them to tyrannize over the people; their only aim is to ſtrip all thoſe who are unlucky enough to fall under their claws. Far from endeavouring to cleanſe that augean ſtable which cavil fills with its filth, they carry freſh cart-loads into it. Where is that Hercules whoſe beneficent arm is to drain that peſtilential ſpring, and to take away all that filth?

What a ſhame, that law-ſuits ſhould laſt years, whole luſtres; that a citizen ſhould ruin himſelf to obtain, nay, without being able to obtain juſtice, which is due to him immediately, and almoſt for nothing.

There ought to be in every place one or ſeveral juſtices, according to the number of its inhabitants, choſen and penſioned by theſe, they ought not to pretend to any farther emolument. In caſe any gratuity ſhould be offered to them, it ſhould be on account of the differences they ſhould have compromiſed and not of the cauſes they ſhould have tried, with

appeal to parliament; very ſevere penalties would reſtrain litigious people.

In a free country, every citizen ought to have a right to vote in all the public elections.

If the laws were as they ought to be and people enlightened, the juſtices would not have much to do.

In the preſent ſtate of the world, it may be ſaid, it is turned upſide down.

What can it be expected from a man ſurrounded, from his childhood, with men who could but pervert his mind ſuch as ſuperſtitious people, hypocrites, cringing ſycophants, who outvie one another in beſtowing upon him the appellation of *majeſty*, or ſuch like, void or almoſt void of ſenſe, which a ſenſible perſon, who ſhould act with candour, would never give nor receive?

What a notion, is it poſſible to entertain of an aſſembly, repreſenting a people, which makes an addreſs to another aſſembly or to a man, with the moſt abject ſupplications, begging as a favour to redreſs their grievances, which he himſelf occaſions?

What

He, who guided by juſtice ſpeaks frankly the truth to a man, or to any number of men, to draw them out of a fatal error, is really their friend and deſerves well of the nation; whereas the flatterer who leads them into error by his lies, is really their enemy; let that flattery ſpring from ignorance or from wickedneſs. Obſtinacy, the perſeverance in that error muſt produce enmity, which muſt be proportioned to the greatneſs of the evils occaſioned by that.

From this principle, it follows that thoſe ſlaves, thoſe tyrants, who pretend now to be the king's friends, thoſe *loyaliſts* (a word whoſe meaning is, who bears patiently the yoke; who cries up his maſters; who licks the hand of him that fetters him; who ſerves or pretends to ſerve, the better to oppreſs) are really enemies not only to the other citizens, without excepting the king, but even to themſelves. If there be ſome among them, that have overcome certain prejudices, let them haſten to prove that reaſon never held in vain her torch ſhining before their ſight.

P. 25. *He is ſure.*] In caſe the nation does not think proper to inflict upon him a puniſhment adequate to the enormity of his crimes. That man receives wages from the nation and is her ſervant, he muſt work in conſequence; he is indebted to her for every thing, and his gratitude ought to be boundleſs: he is a monſter in caſe he does the leaſt harm.

If, moſt unluckily, he has bound himſelf to it by an atrocious oath, let him haſten to deface the leaſt track of it, and to puniſh, exemplarily, the villains who durſt offer it to him. An iniquitous oath can bind no man.

Were we to uſe this expreſſion, *to belong*, he, all thoſe who are paid by the nation belong (in one ſenſe) to this, and by no means the nation to him or to them. He eats the nation's bread and not the nation his. As ſoon as a dunce, a tyrant has fancyed he can ſay, in earneſt, my kingdom, my people, my, any thing you pleaſe, he thinks he has a right to diſpoſe of every thing, as the owner of a kennel, who, without any formality, ſhuts up his dogs, carries or ſends them wherever he

he pleaſes, lends, lets, or ſells them to whom he thinks proper, makes them faſt, or fight when he likes, cripples, or kills them at his eaſe; and does with the kennel what he chuſes. Do not you ſee daily examples of it?

He who will have innocent, oppreſſed citizens ſacrificed for their oppreſſors, is upon a level with the moſt execrable murderer.

P. 32. *The art of villany.*] The courts which wallow in luxuries, while ſo many millions of people are a prey to want, not knowing how to ſpend away their time, under the direction of their holyneſſes the prieſts, play at this game, *which among us, ſhall be the greateſt villain? which among us ſhall improve the art of torturing men?* The people are the ſtakes, their fortunes and their blood, the reward of the winners and loſers. *What is hiſtory,* THE HISTORY OF COURTS, *directed by ſuperſtition, but* ATROCITY *diſplayed.*

The extreme impudence of tyranny, in ſpite of the writings of ſo many great men, deſerves no circumſpection; one would think

ſhe does not feel the ſting, unleſs it goes through the bones to the very marrow. If the truths I ſpeak ſhould make her mad (mad ſhe is at all times) if virtue, ſince the greater it is, the greater her hatred is, never could awe her, if ſhe ſhould be upon the point of glutting her revenge, her rage upon me, ſhe would find me ready to ſeal with my blood every thing I have written for the good of mankind. What is life, at the mercy of tyrants, to a man who ſees ſo many enormous impoſitions, who cannot bear injuſtice and whoſe heart glows with the love of liberty?

P. 33. *Go aſtray from this rule.* He (let there be a ſingle one or ſeveral, it matters not) who, in this caſe, goes beyond the bounds of his duty, which conſiſts in doing good, and minding it is done by the others, bounds ſet by freedom, juſtice, humanity, becomes the enemy of the nation. It is an individual (let us put aſide the jackaſſes, and knaves that ſupport him) who, with the blackeſt ingratitude, rebels againſt a whole nation, to whom he

he lies under the greateſt obligations, who had done him the honour to chuſe him for her firſt magiſtrate. It is he who is to take or is ſuppoſed to take the oath of *allegiance* to the nation. Should he connive to the oppreſſion of the meaneſt citizen, he is guilty.

P. 35. *The preſent miniſtry.*] Diſintereſted perſons, capable of ſerving their country well with ſuch a greatneſs of ſoul as to find their reward in the good they ſhould do, and in the moſt lively gratitude of their countrymen, ought at all times, with equal talents, to be prefered to mercenaries.

A Miniſter, whoſe only aim is to aggrandize himſelf by fettering, by pillaging the nation, deſerves the moſt ignominious death, and to be diſpoſſeſſed of every thing; he has no juſt claim but to an ax, a halter, a pile. Miniſters muſt give TO THE NATION the trueſt account of the laying out of the public money; he, who refuſes to do ſo, pleads from that inſtant guilty.

He

He who employs bad Miniſters, is ſtill more culpable than they. Wo to him who, fooliſhly, wickedly, laviſhes diſhonouring honours, gives places, belonging to the nation, penſions paid by her, with no other intent, but to get to himſelf creatures vile enough to rank themſelves among the hirelings of tyranny.

ALL *the uſeleſs places ought to be ſuppreſſed*; and the emoluments and penſions adequate to the knowledge, work and ſervices. No citizen is to be turned into a ſluggard, or a good for nothing fellow. The archbiſhopricks and biſhopricks, among the reſt, are not only the moſt uſeleſs, but even the moſt hurtful places. However thoſe, who are in poſſeſſion of them, ought, when they are ſuppreſſed, to be provided for *as laymen*.

What can people think of thoſe rich, opulent men, but more intereſted, more baſe ſtill, who, while they lay a claim to nobility, are daſtardly enough to accept of, to beg for humbling places in the houſe of ——— an individual?

P. 27.

P. 37. *A madhouſe*] Among an enlightened people, uſed to apprehend and to adopt all the notions favourable to the happineſs of ſociety, the wretch, who ſhould attempt to introduce ſome, contrary to that happineſs, would get as many proſelytes as a madman; BELIEF, at leaſt in thoſe matters on which happineſs depends, WOULD BE GENERAL.

The ſtate wherein Folly reigns and Bethlam are as like as two drops of water; every madman, either in or out of his lodge, is the apoſtle of his madneſs. I perceive this difference, the unfortunate perſons ſhut up in this, are put almoſt out of condition of doing any harm; whereas the only ſtudy of the wretches in the former, actuated by malignity, *at liberty*, is to deprive every one of his.

Mad-houſes are another object very worthy of the public attention; ſo are hoſpitals, in a word all public inſtitutions.

Ib. *By ignorance.*] Were I leſs acquainted with the effects of that ignorance, I would be amazed to hear any man, but him who

fattens

fattens on the tithes, &c. *of the church*, rather of the nation, ſay, *our happy conſtitution in Church and State*; this notion produces the following. Whenever it is the queſtion of a reformation, few people are to be found, who do not cry out, *provided it be on legal and conſtitutional grounds*; meaning, provided the prejudices be left entire; this wants no farther commentary.

A ſupplement to the note in Page 37. *By corruption.*) The Britiſh Parliament ought not to be like brats to whom a ſly cur of a pedagogue would ſay, children, of what uſe is it, to puzzle one's brains about unravelling old books, waſting paper for ever. A holy-day, my boys, a holy-day; the holy-days, I intend to give you, will take up the greateſt part of the year, and I hope you will by no means fail to bring me preſents, when you come back. Gripe--------God forbid I ſhould mean to go upon the highway, for, beſides the danger attending it, that leads to Tyburn. Be ſharper, and never mind trifles; a word to the

the wiſe. The greateſt part of thoſe who hear me, know very well what ſharing in the booty means, as to the others, within theſe walls and without, headſtrong, froward, they had better be quiet; it is ſhewing them too much mercy, not to flog them three times a day. Good-by, my lads, good-by, I had almoſt forgot to make you obſerve one thing. There is no innovation in this, you know it as well as I; the conduct of my predeceſſors, of pious, of holy memory, and that of your fathers, furniſh us with a thouſand precedents. How fine, how ſweet it is to follow cuſtom, ſuch cuſtoms! People, who fancy to have good intentions, maintain, bawling much, that in this, we are, on one ſide, diſhoneſt, on the other, worſe than aſſes, but, what is that to us? Let them talk as much as they pleaſe; as long as we hold the loaf, the cheeſe, and the knife in our hands, and they are ſatisfied with talking, writing, *humbly* petitioning or rather *humbly* begging, there is no great harm. Indeed, ſuch petitions are made for our backſide, and that of our moſt

reverend

reverend and merely reverend, right honourable and merely honourable, &c. confederates; and our whip, I ſay ſo again, for that of thoſe petitioners. Till we meet again; be good boys, I mean eat and drink hearty, and don't trouble your head about the reſt: if ever I order a faſt, you ſhall have nothing to do with it. VIVANT REX ET REGINA!

Thoſe who, with a heart of flint, find, thanks to ignorance, *ſo much power*, *ſo much grandeur*, ſo much wealth, ſo many pleaſures, in the weakneſs, in the humiliation, in the diſtreſs, in the pain of ſo many millions of people, think it is a pity to periſh. Beſides, if they believe, quite in earneſt, in the fires of their hell, they certainly muſt be afraid of them.

Curſed be for ever thoſe wretches, who are baſe enough to join the public robbers, to receive a part of the booty, and to ſell their country after having ſold themſelves.

When liberty talks of a reformation, theſe people cry out, confuſion! ANARCHY! all is loſt! Being uſed to believe, and to make

people

people to believe, that the moon is made of green cheeſe or ſuch ſtories, and being afraid of the conſequences, they maintain that even the exceſs of diſorder is order, plague health, thieving giving, murdering ſaving.

P. 38, *Thoſe ſo wild beaſts*] *Sacred* mediators between God and men, you, who while you preach meekneſs to your goſlings, calumniate, proſecute, perſecute, ſtrip of their property, deprive of their liberty, hang, maim, ſtab, poiſon, burn, break *upon a croſs*,, &c. thoſe honeſt and enlightened people, who have virtue and courage enough to ſpeak, act or write openly againſt your ſuperlatively nonſenſical, exquiſitely barbarous tenets, laws, and practices; while tyrants, your cowardly ſlaves back you; tell us, if you pleaſe, what inhuman monſter is then your deity? You ſerve then that God, I mean your cruelty, by depriving people of the uſe of their reaſon, by plundering, by exterminating them!

All thoſe great public robbers, thoſe great villains who by keeping the people in the

dark, by perverting their minds, by enacting, ſupporting, enforcing bad laws, not only ſhow, by their example, the little ones the way to Tyburn and drag them there, but alſo force them to become ſuch, are anſwerable to the nation, to the world for all the robberies and murders that have been or ſhall be committed, for all the blood that has been or ſhall be ſhed in conſequence.

Let this lie upon their conſcience, as red hot iron plates, ſtocked with needles, upon the ſoles of their feet.

Ibid. *The ſpiritual power*] Clergymen, for example, have been pleaſed, ſpeaking of power, to make uſe of theſe epithets *ſpiritual*, *temporal*, *ſecular*, which partake of the clearneſs of their myſteries. Thoſe gentlemen, preaching modeſty, humility, poverty, ſtiling themſelves, *without bluſhing*, the ſucceſſors or rather the repreſentatives of ſome JEW WRETCHES, have placed themſelves very modeſtly at the head of nations, and with the greateſt diſintereſtedneſs, have got every thing

in

in their own hands. They lord it over with a rod of iron.

Is the time very far off, when thoſe *moſt reverend* and *reverend* GOOD-NATURED fellows no longer will take it into their heads to make chimerical diſtinctions, and when they will firmly believe that the adminiſtration of juſtice, *in no caſe whatever*, to be ſhort, that the civil affairs (and ſociety is not ſuppoſed to know of any other) that the receiving, the laying out of the public money, do, by no means concern them?

What becomes of thoſe immenſe ſums raiſed for the relief of the poor? Look at thoſe ſhameful workhouſes, wherein they are ſhut up. Every thing that goes through the hands of prieſts, or in which they have any concern, is corrupted and acquires a malignant virtue.

A word more about the ſpiritual power. Thoſe who engraft ſuch a power, ſpringing from and centering in them, in ———, upon the civil one, *which ſolely ſprings from, ſolely centers in the people*, and blend them together, taking the former for the foundation upon

which they erect the whole ſtructure of the laws, of the adminiſtration of juſtice, of the government, making of the whole a moſt barbarous work, a moſt dreadful ſyſtem of tyranny, ſtand above the higheſt pitch of madneſs and of atrocity.

The power I ſay, lies no where elſe, but in the minds, in the hearts, in the hands of the people; they may, at any time, alter their government as they pleaſe; and if they do not do ſo for the beſt, they may thank for it either their ignorance, or their cowardice.

As to any equilibrium between this and that power, or between the different branches of legiſlature, it is mere nonſenſe. The object of a ſociety is to live happy; laws muſt conſequently be framed to anſwer this end. The members of that ſociety muſt be their own law-givers, and unleſs they are brutes, they muſt follow the dictates of common ſenſe. To avoid confuſion, they appoint any number of perſons, call them what you pleaſe, to ſee that theſe laws be followed; and to tell, in the adminiſtration of juſtice, in other words

words, in doing juſtice, a weak or bad perſon, common ſenſe ought to have told you, or tells you to do ſo, &c. In caſe any of thoſe perſons neglects his duty, he is diſcarded and puniſhed; away then with all thoſe ſilly prerogatives of the *crown* (fooliſh expreſſion). All centers in the people, in the public happineſs.

Whenever any perſon or any body of perſons has the inſolence to pretend to any power diſtinct from, or to bring any prerogative or right into competition with thoſe of the people, any way inconſiſtent with their independence, with their welfare; it is high time to bring every ſuch *miſcreant* to his right ſenſes, or to leave him *none*, by cutting him off.

The power of any perſon, any aſſembly, any nation, ends no where elſe but where the leaſt harm to any individual begins. What a fine field for great minds!

P. 41. *Prieſt*] Prieſts ought to follow, at laſt, the example of Mr. Williams, his works will teach them to be uſeful to men; after

having been, till now, the fountains of evil, let them haſten to be thoſe of good. Every one, who has at heart the welfare of ſociety, ought to ſupport that great man, to whom the nation, the whole world is ſo much indebted. He began to deliver, in public, his Lectures on the univerſal Principles of Religion and Morality, Ap. 7, 1776, an epoch, which reflects much luſtre upon the Britiſh nation.

Yes, I ſay, prieſts, as well as kings (no man can find his real intereſt in roguery) will find their intereſt in this; firſt, they will have a competency. They ſhall loſe, it is true, a tyrannical, an uncertain power, founded on chimeras, on injuſtice, on ſlavery, which ſtands in need of fomenting inceſſantly ignorance, the ſpring of all evils, and of ſetting to work all ſorts of ſtratagems, of cruelties, to ſupport itſelf; but they ſhall obtain, in return, that permanent power, whoſe baſis are truth, juſtice, freedom, which our goodneſs, our ſervices, our continual benefits give us over the hearts of our like; whom we think

think it is our duty, and in it we find a pleaſure, to inſtruct more and more.

Far from being without intermiſſion a prey to ſuſpicion, to remorſe, to fear; far from having their ſlumber interrupted, a thouſand times by the mournful and piercing ſhrieks of the unfortunate, whom they oppreſs, or whoſe oppreſſion they occaſion; far from ſeeing, in their grievous dreams, nothing but ſpectres, diſaſters, what, very likely, gave the notion of hell, while the hatred, the execration, the vengeance of honeſt people cover them with ſhame, fill them with fright; they will enjoy without interruption, that profound peace, which, very likely, gave the notion of heaven, and which is given by an upright conſcience, the gratitude and the moſt tender attachment of men. Deſtiny, happy, enviable deſtiny! what heart with the ſmalleſt ſhare of ſenſibility, could withſtand thy charms? Mind, canſt thou conceive a more complete felicity?

When the time, to give back to the elements what they lent us, comes, the ſuperſtitious, the wicked man ſees (among theſe ſects) an

old

old man with a long beard curſing him, his hell gaping ready to ſwallow him up, fire-brands, conſuming flames riſing on all ſides, boiling coppers; his diſordered fancy paints to him raging devils, under the moſt hideous ſhapes ready to exerciſe all ſorts of cruelties upon him. He dies as he vegetated, his heart is torn by remorſe; his mind tortured by fear; hell is really within himſelf; his laſt ſigh is that of deſpair.

The philoſopher, the honeſt man dies as he lived, without trouble, without remorſe, and without fear; heaven is really within himſelf; his laſt ſigh is that of a zephyr leaving a delightful garden, wherein fragrant flowers exhale the ſweeteſt perfume; peace ſhuts his eyelids; he falls aſleep in the boſom of nature, where he goes to be decompounded.

END OF THE NOTES.

A Juſtification of Lord GEORGE GORDON, for being at the Head of the PROTESTANTS againſt the PAPISTS.

To the Editor of the *Courier de l'Europe*.

SIR,

MY intention is to vindicate a Scotch Lord, by undeceiving the world; I hope, therefore, you will condeſcend to communicate what follows to the public. Were I not perſuaded, that, enlightened by the torch of reaſon, the love of mankind animates you, what endears you to the friends

friends of liberty, I would read with leſs ſurpriſe in your paper of the 4th of this month, a paragraph, the author of which as knowing as he is, has made a miſtake, concerning the reſolutions of the Proteſtant Aſſociation, of which Lord George Gordon is Preſident. No, I never will undertake the defence of fanaticiſm and of perſecution; here is what Juſtice dictates to me, in regard to the proceedings of the Proteſtants of Great Britain, towards the Catholics. It is ſaid in that paragraph, *we muſt do this juſtice to government, that the Roman Catholics would not have been perſecuted in England, did not* THE PITYLESS SPIRIT OF RELIGIOUS INTOLERANCE INTIMIDATE EVERY-WHERE THE SOVEREIGN AUTHORITY. This Writer lends to the *Sovereigns*, a ſentiment, that the moſt ſacred duties, that their own intereſt, in a word that every thing *orders them to*

have

have, but I do not know whether a great number of theſe magiſtrates ever had it; let it be as it will, it muſt have been very weak. How long will reign this error, ſo vulgar, ſo fatal, that theſe people have hardly any other power but that of doing any thing that is bad, or of tolerating it; that impunity is to crown the work; and whenever the queſtion is to do good, (while no other power is or can be granted to them) they are to be intimidated by the reſentment of villains?

It was the Court of London, that ſet firſt the example of intolerance, paving the way to perſecution. It is that ſcheme of deſpotiſm, formed by ungrateful people, to ſtifle, if it were poſſible, the ſeed itſelf of liberty, which directs the ſteps of the Proteſtants againſt the Roman Catholics. When it

was

was the queſtion in the month of April laſt, to eſtabliſh an univerſal toleration, ardently wiſhed for by ſo many (1) illuſtrious members of both Houſes of Parliament, by the moſt reſpectable congregation in England, by all the enlightened perſons, not only in Great Britain, but in the whole world, did not pityleſs Fanaticiſm ſet out furious from St. James's? Did he not fly to one of his favourite abodes, the Univerſity of Oxford? After having dictated there that ſhameful oath, the maſter-piece of Intolerance, did he not come back haſtily; and taking L— N—— by the hand did he not lead him to the Houſe of Commons, where he was his Counſellor, required and obtained the votes of all thoſe whom the moſt conſummate ignorance or the moſt ſcandalous corruption rendered deaf to the voice of thoſe great

great men, who were pleading the cauſe of liberty, of humanity, and blind to the intereſts of their country?

The Anglican and Roman churches agree in the fundamental points; they are equally friendly to deſpotiſm, becauſe then, they lord it over with more ſway: the idea alone of liberty makes them to ſhudder. The favour granted to a religon, which is not laviſh of her own, gave umbrage to the Proteſtants, whoſe Prieſts are leſs powerful than thoſe of the high church, who have ſeized (2) upon the reins of the ſtate. From that moment, they reſolved not to perſecute her, but to put her back in the ſame ſituation, wherein ſhe was, before the laſt Bill made in her favour; and to repel towards its center, as much as it would lie in their power, according to the notion they have of liberty, the royal authority, under the

command of the high clergy, by leſſening the number of the moſt dangerous imps of arbitrary power.

In the name of wonder, what has Popery done to have ſome good reaſon to complain that favours are not granted to it? Has it given the example of toleration or followed in this, that of others? When that toleration is mentioned, partial muſt be underſtood, for the univerſal one is known, that I know of, (3) no where; *I hope it will ſoon be known in Great Britain.* Are its dungeons, its inquiſitions deſtroyed? Are its piles no longer kindled, will they continue ſo for ever? Have people forgotten, forgotten! never, the moſt deplorable fate, it would move the heart of the wildeſt tyger, of Don Pablo d'Olavidé, whom it cruelly holds in fetters, after having ſtript him of every thing? Do the moſt iniquitous, the moſt barbarous practices

give

give a right to the favour of the world; do thoſe who are guilty of them win, by that means, the love of men? Have people . . . . . ? no, no.

Lord G. Gordon did, no doubt, conſider this affair from this point of view,(4) and he was thereby engaged to accept of the offers, made, ſucceſſively, to him, by the Proteſtants in Scotland and by thoſe in England, to put himſelf at their head: the author of the abovementioned paragraph does not do juſtice to this enlightened Lord, to this friend to liberty. Thoſe who give the name of a ſect to every perſon born in it, ſay, I am

A ROMAN CATHOLIC.

London, Jan. 6, 1780.

Reaſons for not publiſhing the above letter without the notes. EXTRACT from the *Courier de l' Europe*; January 11,

page 20. "*We have received the Letter ſigned* A ROMAN CATHOLIC; *the profound knowledge which it ſuppoſes in its Author, would be a ſingular inducement for us to accept of the correſpondence, which he has been pleaſed to offer to us in a preceding letter,* (inſerted in that paper) *but a moment's reflection upon this ſubject, will make him perceive that by yielding to that allurement, we ſhould find ourſelves ſtrangely circumſtanced: it is not abſolutely without danger that, in performing faithfully the duties of our profeſſion, we give a true account of all the moſt delicate occurrences in religious and political matters: and if it be dangerous to mention facts, how much more would it not be to venture bold reflections, liable to ſolid objections, which would bring us into a polemic labyrinth.*"

The Author, by no means afraid of having to encounter any ſolid objection, or of ſeeing either the Editor of the *Courier*

Courier de l'Europe or himſelf bewildered in a labyrinth of controverſy, could not blame that Gentleman for minding above all things the intereſt of the perſons concerned in the ſale of that paper abroad. *A ſmall ſample of the perſecution attending popery.*

NOTES on the foregoing.

(1) Lord G. Gordon voted againſt the clauſe in the Diſſenters Bill, conſequently in favour of univerſal toleration. I knew nothing of this when I wrote this letter, I judged of him by his public conduct.

(2) Many people ſetting aſide *his Grace*, the moſt reverend SPIRITUAL FATHER IN GOD, the Archbiſhop of Canterbury, look upon his Majeſty the Britiſh King, as his Holineſs the Pope of Great Britain. This was born, the other was made a Pope. This though he may very ſubmiſſively, moſt devoutly liſten to a ſermon, whoſe text may be equivalent to, moſt likely not quite ſo ſignificant

cant as, *Verily, verily, children, did not Shiteuponyou, that ugly, that naſty giant, who feeds upon livers of leprous children of Galaba, ſay unto you, open your mouths wide, and receive all my contents?* chap. iii. verſe 45, out of theſe two moſt eminent Proph. *Jew-madman* and *Scourgemankind*, receive the ———, give his offering, *the ſword of ſtate* being carried before his Majeſty to and from the ——— by a *nobleman*, and have it publiſhed the next day in all the news-papers, for the edification of all their Majeſties LIEGE and LOYAL SUBJECTS, yet he appoints ſuch a preacher, the people muſt provide for him; he makes, at leaſt he can make of him a Lord, a member of the upper houſe, moreover a member of a power above what they call the temporal one; and above all a ſtanch friend to all ſorts of ------- and conſquently a mortal foe to liberty, in other words, to the rights of mankind, if you chuſe, to the happineſs of the people.

(3) I find that *every citizen of Pennſylvania has full liberty to worſhip God in the manner*

manner and ſeaſon moſt agreeable to the dictates of his own conſcience.

May fame tell all men of the glory of the inhabitants of that part of the world; may ſhe induce them to follow their example; May that country be an aſylum for all the oppreſſed. I can not help making a little digreſſion.

Men. Brutes is too weak an expreſſion, ſpeaking of thoſe pupils of ſuperſtition, who, while they are waiting for the knife, lick, with the moſt ſhameful cowardice, the feet and the hands of their plunderers, of their butchers, bleſſing them for having, among the reſt, deprived them of the greateſt bleſſings reaſon and liberty; and liſten with the moſt inexcuſable, the moſt inſupportable indifferrence to, or fly with the utmoſt ferocity of madneſs at thoſe who ſhew them how to recover thoſe invaluable bleſſings, &c. and to ſave their lives.

It is worſe ſtill, when they look without being moved, without the leaſt emotion, at thoſe who already feel the knife; when they

ſee

ſee unconcerned, and even with pleaſure, thoſe, whoſe only crime (the greateſt virtue) is to have laid down every thing for the public good, for juſtice, either ſtript or ſlaughtered before them.

(4) A Letter, written by the Rev. Mr. John Weſley, was publiſhed in the Morning Chronicle, Feb. 5, 1780. It begins with theſe remarkable words, which do a great deal of honour to this Gentleman.--------" With perſecution I have nothing to do, I perſecute no man for his religious principles, *let there be as boundleſs a freedom in religion, as any man can conceive.* But this does not touch the point: I will ſet religion, true or falſe, utterly out of the queſtion.------I inſiſt that no government, not Roman Catholic, ought to tolerate men of the Roman Catholic perſuaſion."

The arguments by which he proves this, inviting any one to anſwer them, are in this ſhort recapitulation at the end of his letter: " Setting then religion aſide, it is plain, that upon principles of reaſon, no government ought

ought to tolerate men, who cannot give any ſecurity to that government for their allegiance and peaceable behaviour. But this no Romaniſt can do, not only while he holds, that *no faith is to be kept with heretics*, but, ſo long as he acknowledges either *prieſtly abſolution*, or the *ſpiritual power of the Pope*."

A philoſopher, ſenſible of the enormities of which the Church of Rome is guilty, would find his mind blunted, his pen dropping from his fingers, he would find himſelf in a ſtate of ſtupefaction, if he were to attempt its juſtification. Let then the Papiſts themſelves anſwer theſe objections.

Without controverting the points ſtated by Mr. Weſley, I will quote a few paſſages from *the Nature and Extent of intellectual Liberty, in a Letter to Sir George Saville*, by Mr. Williams, to which I refer the reader. "The moſt honourable diſtinction of the diſſenters, has ever been the public avowal of a truth, which is the *firſt principle* of freedom, and of the utmoſt importance to morals and policy. That opinions, true or falſe

falſe, are not to be enjoined by the magiſtrate, becauſe, being permitted to enjoin the belief of truth, he will claim a right to enjoin the belief of falſehood." p. 8.

"You ſtood up in favour of liberty; and you ſtated that eternal axiom on which it reſts, *that opinions muſt be free, and actions only can be limited.*" p. 16.

"The queſtion is not concerning thoughts, for they muſt be free; it is not concerning actions, for they muſt be limitted; but concerning an intermediate matter, which is the declaration and avowal of thoughts and opinions." p. 24.

"All men ſhould be at liberty to *declare all* their principles and opinions; and every act which reſtrains that liberty is tyrannical and injurious to a ſtate, which is inſtituted for public happineſs." p. 23.

And now I will ſay this in favour of the toleration of Popery. A tyrannical ſuperſtition is dreadful, I avow; and none more ſo than the Romiſh one. This paganiſm, while it takes upon himſelf to burn deiſts as well as atheiſts,

atheiſts, promiſcuouſly with Jews, *Heretics*, &c. while he ſets up for the Don Quixote of a deity like him, contains, in the main, atheiſm, which it diſgraces ſo much that a *real*, good atheiſt (let no papiſt, nor any ſuperſtitious man, ſay, ſuch people are bad) would bluſh at being compared with the beſt of its SAINTS. As to deiſm, I will be entirely ſilent; I have ſaid enough: *bray a fool in a mortar, he never will be the wiſer.* Had I a mind to expatiate upon theſe three words, deiſm, atheiſm, and papiſm, I could eaſily fill a volume.

It contains every thing the moſt tremendous that ſuperſtition can contrive, perjury, treachery, in three words, all ſorts of blaſphemies, of impoſitions, of cruelties. Yet, what will be the conſequence of its being tolerated? When once toleration is univerſal, the light diffuſed by reaſon will be ſo great, that it will be aſhamed of ſhowing its monſtrous head.

How fallen am I! will ſay this ſuperſtition, gnaſhing her teeth, tearing off her hair, ſcratching

ſcratching her face with her claws. How fallen am I! will ſhe cry out; Alas! my enemy, *(hell!* her looks are divine) whom I have vilified, perſecuted ſo long, offers now, with impunity, to men peace and happineſs; while I never held up to them, but diſcord and deſtruction: they flock to her; I am undone! After having ſnatched from me my cloak and my maſk, ſhe ſhows me to all mankind, with her radiant torch in her hand, ſuch as I am, horrible: go, fly, hide, bury thyſelf in the deepeſt, in the darkeſt, abyſs.

The Pope would not think it worth his while to ſend emiſſaries to plot in this country; all his cabals in favour of HIS SUBJECTS in it, would avail him of nothing: ſo much more ſo, if thoſe intruſted by the people with their government, ſhould, as bound as much by duty as by intereſt, give a good example: to be ſure, when madneſs is to carry the day, when ſuperſtitions, when, I ſay, Paganiſms are to run a race, Popery is very forward, it ſtruts, for that old blade knows very well it ſtands the beſt chance;

but whenever it is to encounter reaſon; and it is not ſtrong enough to throw her into a dungeon or a fire, it ſculks. In this caſe, the more ſilly, the more extravagant, the more barbarous a creed, a principle, and opinion is, the leſs it is to be feared; it ſtands no chance; it is at beſt a poor object of ridicule and of contempt.

If that could not ſave Popery from being deprived of the benefit of univerſal toleration; let it owe it to this conſideration, in favour of humanity. *Princes* wage war with one another, upon the moſt frivolous pretences; a bubble kindles their wrath: ſuperſtition, always buſy to ſow diſſenſions, ſets theſe all-graſping machines a-going; and their ſilly ambition (cruelty) crowns the work. If nations have any thing to do with ſuch quarrels, it is to quel them at their breaking out; or to let *the wranglers* know, that they ſhall be ſent to fight their own battles.

But all nations are concerned in the perſecution of all thoſe who do not perſecute, of honeſt people, of philoſophers, of the greateſt

eſt friends and benefactors to mankind. Let the Popiſh Prieſts be here as hoſtages, as a ſecurity for the good behaviour of their brethren abroad, towards any one whom their ſpirit of intolerance, of perſecution, ſhall want to ſacrifice to his own rage. Let them warn of this their *co eſpiritual* father in God, i. e. head-tyrant, and the popiſh governments.

They ſhall undergo the puniſhment pointout by retaliation, property for property, impriſonment for impriſonment, a halter for a halter, poiſon for poiſon, a dagger for a dagger, a fire for a fire, a croſs for a croſs, &c. Thus would the cruelty of thoſe barbarians, thoſe mad blood-hounds, be curbed; fear would teach them toleration and ſome good ſhould accrue from ſo great, ſo unſufferable an evil.

Let us ſuppoſe the worſt, Popery alone is, unluckily, not included in the univerſal toleration; yet as papiſts will not be perſecuted here, nor in any part of this commonwealth, they ought, by all means, though they ſhould not

not obtain a full toleration, to be made anſwerable for the perſecutions exerciſed by their brethren in any part of the world.

The greateſt glory to a man is to overcome prejudices, and to teach people to be free, and happy: the greateſt glory to a nation is, to lay her tyrants, together with their imps, down in the duſt, and to diffuſe freedom and happineſs all over the World.

E N D.

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